

Report to: **Hub Committee**

Date: **27<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

Title: **Future Localities Service**

Portfolio Area: **Customer First**  
**Portfolio holder: Cllr Jeffrey Moody**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance **N**  
obtained:

Authors: **Cllr Jeffrey Moody** Role: **Portfolio holder; Customer First**

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Hub Committee RESOLVES to:**

- 1) Approve an additional £13,000 to be built into the establishment base budget each year to meet the additional costs of the new structure; and**
- 2) Note the new structure and approach set out in Appendix A of the report and agree to the implementation of the new service.**

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1** The Localities Task and Finish Group was set up in October 2020 to undertake a review of the Localities service.
- 1.2** Subsequently, a report was submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny panel in March 2021 setting out clear recommendations for the Localities service which would support the Council's emerging corporate strategy and were also reflective of the Council's response to the Covid-19 Pandemic (Minute O&S 69 refers).
- 1.3** The Portfolio holder and Lead Officers have considered the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group and have determined a

new structure; including new roles to reflect the needs and requirements of West Devon Borough Council.

- 1.4 This report sets out the proposed changes for Members to consider to deliver on the Task and Finish Group recommendations, and includes the associated costs of the new operating model.
- 1.5 The work of the Task and Finish Group is acknowledged, with Members and Officers working closely together to scope out the concluding recommendations.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Localities team have been operating for over five years and its creation was a key and innovative part of the Council's transformation programme.
- 2.2 The Localities Team act as a liaison and support service to Elected Members, residents, and visitors to West Devon Borough Council area. The service also undertakes work on behalf of a number of services across the organisation.
- 2.3 Following the Extended Leadership restructure in 2019, the team are now managed by the Business Manager for Case Management, supported by the Localities Team Leader.
- 2.4 Since its inception, the Localities service has not been reviewed and its operational and strategic direction has lost focus over time, with both Officers and Elected Members unclear on its purpose.
- 2.5 Currently the Localities service operates independently from other services. The need to build and formalise closer working relationships was identified as part of the Task and Finish Group, and will form part of the new structure if agreed.

## **3. Future Locality service - Outcome**

- 3.1 The Task and Finish Group set out a clear set of recommendations to ensure the Council delivers on its emerging priorities. Therefore careful consideration has been given to the operational delivery of this to ensure a robust and 'fit for purpose' service without compromising current work tasks and responsibilities. A number of proposals outlined below, for Members to consider, will deliver on these:
  - 3.1.1 Creation of a new shared Localities Support Officer (administrative role) within the team to allow Mobile Officers to spend more time 'on the ground' in the community. By centralising the administrative function of the service to a dedicated resource, this will ensure workflow is managed most effectively.
  - 3.1.2 Relaunch the Localities team and provide them with a sense of identity both for the Officers and the community. Providing them with a uniform making them easily identifiable, and a professional and friendly ambassador of the Council.

- 3.1.3** Enhancing and redefining the role of the Senior Mobile Localities Officer to a dedicated resource for Members only ensuring a quick, efficient response to elected Member concerns and issues.
- 3.1.4** The introduction into the team of a shared Senior Localities Officer to manage the quality, governance, compliance, and projects within the service.
- 3.1.5** Restructure the service, redefining roles and responsibilities to;
- provide a consistent visible presence within the community
  - provide clarity to Members and communities about who does what
  - enable officers to focus on problem solving in the field
  - move administrative tasks to a central function
- 3.2** All of the Council's operational workforce are now managed by the Business Manager - Case Management, therefore to ensure a fair and consistent approach to operational delivery, it is proposed that the following teams are included as part of the wider localities function (please see further details in Appendix B):
- Environmental Protection Case Managers
  - Waste Case Managers
  - Civil Enforcement Officers

By merging the teams together, there is the ability to raise the profile of the Council through more on-street visibility when it is needed most and increased public and business engagement. The outcome will be a consistent approach to education, enforcement, and contract monitoring with the aims of improving environmental quality, encouraging visitors to West Devon, and supporting the positive reputation of the Council.

## **4 Financial considerations**

- 4.1** As per the proposed structure, there is a budget pressure of £12,500 which is required to be built into the salary base budget each year. This pressure derives from the creation of the new shared Localities Support Officer (Administrative role) and the introduction of a shared Senior Localities Officer – Compliance, Enforcement, and Projects. There is also a pressure of £500 annually to provide uniforms.

## **5 Options available and consideration of risk – future recommendations;**

- 5.1** The Hub are asked to consider and agree the proposed recommendations as set out in the report.
- 5.2** There is a reputational risk of not adopting the proposals in particular during the summer months when footfall in West Devon is higher. This would

impact the street scene and public engagement with visitors and local businesses.

## 6 Implications

| Implications                                 | Relevant to proposals Y/N | Details and proposed measures to address   |
|--|---------------------------|--|
| Legal/Governance                             | Y                         | The Hub Committee is responsible for recommending the Revenue Budget Proposals on an annual basis to Council.  |
| Financial                                    | Y                         | To acknowledge and approve an additional £13,000 to be built into the staffing establishment base budget each year to meet the additional staffing costs associated with the seasonal posts. |
| Risk   | N                         |  |
| Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications |                           |  |
| Equality and Diversity                       | N                         |  |
| Safeguarding                                 | N                         |  |
| Community Safety, Crime and Disorder         | N                         |  |
| Health, Safety and Wellbeing                 | N                         |  |
| Other implications                           | N                         |  |

### Supporting Information

#### Appendices:

Appendix A – Proposed structure

Appendix B – Team working